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August 17, 2020

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L-Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

I urge you to immediately resolve the impacts to services that appear to be resulting from changes in operations at the United States Postal Service (USPS). I have heard from constituents and small businesses who are being significantly impacted by delays in mail delivery. Businesses are struggling to stay afloat and residents are relying more heavily than ever on the U.S. mail to deliver prescriptions, health care information, bills and other vital products and documents, making it imperative that the USPS provide timely, reliable service.

Starting under the leadership of Benjamin Franklin, the USPS has provided centuries of dependable mail delivery to Americans in all corners of this nation – and that's what we continue to expect. Since you assumed your role in June of this year, you have outlined steps that were supposed to result in improved operations and ultimately better services to U.S. citizens. This is certainly a laudable goal, but what Southwest Washington residents have reported to me is the opposite: significant delays in delivery and unreliable service.

On Thursday, August 13, in an internal memo to staff, you admitted that your sweeping changes had led to unintended, negative consequences. Yet as of today, August 17, you have not rolled back those changes. Additionally, reports of new changes to USPS operations and organizational structure, including the removal of mail sorting machines and changes to overtime procedures, further underscore my concerns regarding the new direction at USPS.

Many of the communities I represent in Southwest Washington are rural, relying on the USPS for last mile delivery, and these service interruptions have further exacerbated the divide between rural communities and those living in and near cities. Senior citizens are disproportionately impacted by USPS delays since they are more dependent on mail to obtain essential prescription medications – a reliance that has increased dramatically during the pandemic.

Additionally, small businesses and customers alike can't afford delays in the delivery of products. As you know, Congress has already had to put in place several emergency resources to keep small businesses afloat during the pandemic. As they cope with restrictions in walk-in customers and other financial hardships, the last thing they need is avoidable disruptions with the delivery of the goods they're trying to sell.

The delays are also impeding the ability of residents in distress to obtain assistance. Just this week, I received a letter from a constituent currently experiencing homelessness a month after they sent it requesting assistance with finding housing options. Additionally, other constituents have told me

they're not receiving vital paperwork from my office that allows me to assist them with federal agencies – weeks after I've sent them.

In Congress, I've supported solutions to solidify and strengthen USPS mail delivery, from championing six-day delivery, to providing USPS with emergency borrowing authority via the *CARES Act* to ensure it could solidify its services during the pandemic. My constituents do not want to see those efforts undermined by poorly executed cost-cutting measures.

It's imperative that you change course quickly. Like many other states, Washington has conducted its elections exclusively by mail for many years, which means that in order for a fair election to take place when ballots are delivered in less than two months, those citizens who cast their votes in a lawful manner can rely on the USPS to ensure that vote is counted. Your actions and statements to date have unnecessarily undermined confidence in our election process, and I urge you to take steps to restore trust as quickly as possible.

I appreciate your consideration of these issues and urge you to take immediate action to restore timely, reliable mail delivery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jaime Herrera Beutler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress